

## Mayors Meet to Discuss Climate Change

November 13th, 2006 @ 3:31pm

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A tipping point -- mayors from around the country and climate scientists say that they believe that U.S public opinion is at or approaching that point about understanding the dangers of global warming and climate change.

Dozens of mayors from around the country are in Utah today for the Sundance Summit. This is the second year it has come here to talk about climate change. Those KSL spoke with earlier today about this issue say they're observing a notable change in public opinion.



Hurricane Katrina in the south, extended drought in the Midwest, shrinking glaciers and snowpacks in mountains of the west and Alaska added fuel to a debate that was raising about global warming and whether emissions from burning fossil fuels are making hurricanes stronger and/or more frequent.

No matter what part of the country they came from, the mayors told us they're observing changes in their communities, in terms of the environment and public opinion. Salt Lake's mayor has made this a top priority since he was first elected.

Mayor Rocky Anderson, Salt Lake City: "I think it's catching on. I think that now we're seeing a lot of states, a lot of governors who are finally getting it, with massive reductions of global warming pollutants."

Mark Begich can tell you all about the glacier in his hometown in the heart of red state Alaska, that's now nearly vanished.



Mayor Mark Begich, Anchorage, Alaska "I could literally be out there and I could touch elements of the glacier. I took my four-year old son out there about three weeks ago and it's no longer in existence. You can see it far, far away from you."

Pegeen, Hanrahan, Mayor, Gainesville, Fla.: "I do think more people are saying, you know, if this is real it can be a very very serious problem that we just simply have to address."

Heather Fargo, Mayor, Sacramento, Calif.: "I think we'll finally have some traction in terms of the everyday person putting this towards the top of their list of concerns."

It's not just politicians taking notice. A recent poll by the National Wildlife Federation found a majority of hunters and anglers are seeing numerous signs of climate change from shorter to winters to less ice in waterways.

Larry Schweiger, National Wildlife Federation: "The hunters and anglers of America are seeing changes happening to their world."

In some towns the citizens are leading groundbreaking efforts to change. We visited Boulder, Colorado last week where a first-in-the-US ballot measure asked voters to raise their utility bills slightly to fund a million dollar a year program to promote renewable energy and reduce green house emissions. It passed by more than 60%.

Mayor Mark Ruzzin, Boulder, Colo.: "There's a very high level of awareness about climate change, what's happening to our climate and what cities can do to help with that."

Dean Rosina Biereaum, University of Michigan: "I think, yes, that the public is more aware. And I think there's strong support for taking steps to combat it."

Mayor Rocky Anderson: "I think it's catching on. I think that now we're seeing a lot of states and a lot of governors who are finally getting it, and with massive reductions of global warming pollutants."

Mayors we spoke with say they believe the issue, as well as energy, will be gaining prominence with the new democratic congress. In the mean time, a number of cities around the country have adopted their own programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their town, just like Salt Lake City has done.